

Oct 20: Political program to be announced by the President

1. Recent developments with respect to offensive capability in Cuba constitute the gravest threat to the peace and security of the Caribbean area as well as to the world. Thus the can and should be discussed by the Security Council and measures should be taken to avert any immediate danger and to find, through negotiation, permanent solution to the problem.
2. Ambassador Stevenson will propose to the Security Council tomorrow (?) (sic) a resolution whereby the UN would dispatch immediately observation teams to all strategic nuclear missile sites maintained on the territory of any country other than the three major nuclear powers. These observation teams, which would be placed in Cuba, Italy, and Turkey, would insure that no surprise attack could be mounted in any of these countries pending a permanent solution to the problem of foreign missile bases.
3. If the SU justifies these missile bases in Cuba as necessary to guarantee that country against foreign invasion, I reply that there is, in fact, no such threat to Cuba. But the US would agree, along with the other American states, to guarantee the territorial integrity of Cuba, and we propose the organization and immediate dispatch of a UN force to Cuba, modeled on the UN Emergency Force, to effectuate this guarantee. But to insure the security of the hemisphere we must insist on the prompt dismantling of these missile sites in Cuba and the withdrawal of all Soviet military personnel. Concurrently the US will evacuate our base at Guantanamo and withdraw all forces and weapons therefrom.

Because of the danger of escalation the SU's clandestine action in Cuba has endangered the whole world and demands that we all hasten the conclusion of nuclear and general disarmament before it is too late. We can draw no better lesson from this experience. And the US stands ready to consider with the Soviet Union the elimination of the NATO strategic bases situated in Italy and Turkey and all other bases on the soil of countries other than the nuclear powers in the context of the disarmament treaties now under consideration.

(another version, 20 Oct: 4. We would be prepared to implement the phased withdrawal of all American forces from Guantanamo in company with the phased withdrawal of all Sov military personnel from Cuban installations and the dismantling of the missile sites.

5. In the present state of missile technology, with its long-range capability, foreign bases add little if anything to either Soviet or American missile potential. For this reason the US would be ~~xxxxxx~~ prepared to enter into ~~gn~~ negotiations with the SU looking towards the elimination of all strategic missile bases maintained on foreign soil. We would be willing to negotiate this matter either in the context of the disarmament discussions presently going forward, or independently. Note: 4 and 5 can be used alternatively or cumulatively.

((Compare to: a) US initiative on Turkey considered preceding week to soften effect of US surprise attack on missiles; b) Defanging resolution of next week.

Stev. memo concerning Security Council presentation:

9. Whether or not the SC or GA may have acted on our resolution, no UN presence can be established in Cuba without Soviet consent, which will probably not be forthcoming before a Summit meeting. Hence we must assume that the base build-up may continue pending a broad political settlement reached at the Summit. A full political program (UN observers, territorial integrity of Cuba, and evacuation of foreign bases) proposed now might well attract so much general support that the Soviets would stop further build-up pending the Summit and make an air strike unnecessary.

Oct 20: Nitze. Possible action by Soviets in event that blockade imposed, Soviets continue construction and we then strike.

The psychological climate after the President's speech, the relatively restrained US approach and such political proposals as we may have made in the UN should be quite different in the event of a delayed strike, following onevidence of continued construction, from that to be expected from an initial surprise attack.

((only estimate I've seen of this sequence, and distinction on consequences.))

The delayed strike would face the Sovs with most serious decisions. They could not fail to take some form of counter-action without the most serious loss of face. The more forceful options open to them would, however, face them with most serious risks of a course which could be beyond their further control. They could not ignore the increased risks to them from an aroused world.

It can be argued that they would then show great caution, having clearly misjudged the initial play in the game. In that event they would confine themselves to propaganda, threats and negotiation.

On the other hand those urging more forceful actions might gain the upper hand in Sov decisions. The same options of forceful action would be open to them as in the event of an initial surprise attack. The political climate would, however, be substantially different.

(Implication is that climate would be more favorable to us. This supports "options" approach rather than immediate strike. It could be inferred directly from this--and from no other discussion I've seen--that Sovs, looking ahead one step, might back down if we could convince them of likelihood of strike following blockade, given unpromising situation they would then inhabit.))

(Nuclear blow from Cuba; US reply with invasion of Cuba, seriously consider compensatory strike against SU with notice of limited character). (Preemptive attack on SAC not intelligent--against alerted SAC. Blockade of Berlin: but effect of our action in Cuba would add great credibility to the Phase II measures contemplated by Berlin contingency planning. ((good))

Most serious danger is that they would strike our bases in Turkey or elsewhere with conventional weapons. We might have to eat these losses (why?) and go into negotiations re overseas bases. Our negotiating position would, however, be vastly stronger than if we had not acted against the Cuban installations.

((All in all, the most relevant--and validated--estimate.))

December 29, 1962

Dear Mr. President:

The Ambassador from Turkey presented an interpretation of Khrushchev's behavior in the Cuban crisis that might interest you; namely, that Khrushchev didn't know the difference in U.S. behavior between a Presidential and a Congressional election year.

He observed Khrushchev closely in New York in the fall of 1960 when he represented Turkey at the U.N. General Assembly. He noted then the impact on Khrushchev of seeing the U.S. rudderless during the election campaign, without even Lodge in attendance. He recalled that Jerry Wadsworth was moved into the breach. Khrushchev disported himself freely in that atmosphere. He is convinced that Khrushchev thought the same disarray would prevail during the election campaign of 1962.

We can leave it to the historians to check it out.

May I add a word. I remember with admiration the depth of your concern for the Cubans on the beach at the worst of the April 1961 affair, the night of the Congressional reception, when there was occasion for many other things to be on your mind. And I know that personal concern never left you. Their return now is thus doubly gratifying.

A Happy New Year.

Faithfully yours,

/s/ waet
W. W. Rostow

The President

Washington, D. C.

After phoning me for several days, had a half-hour interview with Dob. He said after our informal conversation of Aug. 23 he had informed the Premier, who had immediately asked him (somehow to Dob's surprise, I gather) to pass on the following message, on which he urged me to take notes).
Memory

Sept 6: Dobrynin-Sorenson

The Soviet Government will take no action prior to the November elections to complicate the international situation or to raise the level of tension between our governments. We undertake not to do this so long as no action on the other side changes the situation.

2. The Premier definitely will not come to the UN for the opening of the General Assembly. If he should decide to come at all, it would not be till late November (after the elections). He does not want to interfere in your internal affairs.

This includes Berlin and the German question.

I appreciated this message, but must report the President's feeling that recent actions by the Soviets had already done a great deal to complicate the situation. Congress and the public were much more sensitive to Cuba. In view of such Soviet actions there, this assurance seemed both hollow and tardy. (At this point Dob. interjected that he had tried to reach me with this message a week ago, before the Cuban issue heated up). The President had understood that the Premier did not desire to furnish weapons to our political opponents--therefore he takes the Soviet actions in Cuba as something of a deliberate and personal affront. The President was also very irritated by the Tass comment on our U-2 note, which he had taken pains to make moderate, temperate, and conciliatory (?). Dob claimed not to have seen the Tass comment, but you know how newspapers are, it was necessary to wait for the official comment.

He said he appreciated my comments on Cuba and would pass them on immediately. However, the arms being sent there were purely for defensive purposes. What the Soviet Union was doing there was nothing radical or new; the process at issue had been going on gradually and quietly for some time. To my mention of electronic equipment, technicians and missiles ((SAMS?)) he made no comment.

6 Sept.

In response to repeated phone calls, had half-hour conversation with D. He said he had sent report on our informal conversation of 23 Aug to K and, somewhat to his surprise, had received message from to be transmitted to me. (D read this slowly and urged me to take notes).

1. K would undertake nothing on international scene that would embarrass USG prior to elections, provided ~~xxxx~~ US behaved likewise.

2. K would not come to UN for opening; if he came, it would be after elections. He did not desire to interfere with internal politics.

((under 1; this specifically applied to Berlin.))

I replied that ~~xx~~ SU actions in Cuba had already caused Admin great trouble; in view of recent events, K assurance was both hollow and tarry. D demurred that he had tried to reach me with message a week ago. ((i.e., prior to discovery of SAMS, Pres. statement of Sept 4; was this hint that SU would not announce SAMS if US did not--encouragement to Pres to refrain from announcing? Or was D approach motivated by, or ~~xxxx~~ made even more urgent by, Pres statement of Sept 4?)) ((Meanwhile, SU was protesting U-2 strongly; was this a hint that U-2s should be stopped: a) incident would cause "trouble," would be due to US action, would release K from bargain; b) presence of SAMS made incident possible; c) there was nothing more for U-2s to find; d) if ~~xx~~ there were anything more there to find, K wouldn't announce it or use it politically prior to election; e) therefore, just as well not to find it prior to election (assuming Pres would not want to act strongly, or have matter public, prior to election); f) by not calling public attention to U-2s--despite hints in Pres statement of ~~xxxx~~ 4 Sept--K would not make it difficult to suspend flights temporarily.)) ((Did D know of missiles? U-2? Seems simply messenger here--and he did not bring up Cuba)) I pointed out ~~xxxx~~ extreme sensitivity to this particular issue ((i.e., more than Berlin) by Congress and public. Pres had understood that K did not wish to give aid to political opponents of Admin ((Aug 23 talk?)). Therefore he took these recent events as a deliberate and personal affront. ((Compare to Ike on Suez.))

I also described his indignation at the nasty tone of the Izvestia comment on the U-2 note, which he had taken pains to make moderate in tone. D said he was not familiar with this comment, that there had been no official reply yet, that you knew how newspapers were.

D said he would report attitudes on Cuba carefully. He repeated several times that nothing new was going on in Cuba, that events there had been proceeding gradually and quietly for some time, that arms there were purely for defensive purposes. I cited Pres distinction between offensive and defensive weapons, and he said weapons were defensive. He made no comment, confirming or otherwise, on my mention of Soviet ~~xxxx~~ technicians, electronic gear or missile preparations ((Sou. read this as meaning strategic missiles; I take it as SAMS)).

((Same day, Sept 6, D described weapons as defensive to Stev))

((Guess: K message, parts 1 and 2, meant: I won't cause political trouble for you, by revealing anything embarrassing, if you don't. He couldn't mean: I won't do anything secretly--i.e., without immediate political consequences for you: since, as S points out, he had already done so, as Pres had revealed

McG-Dob, June 14

(end): The Amb expressed his admiration for the political leadership of the Pres, and asked me who I thought would win the Congressional elections in November. I told him that this was a question he should put to others, and we parted as cheerfully as we began.

((subject of elections, so far as record shows, always brought up by Russians))

14

Aug. 24, Schlesinger, Dob

1. The Amb's chief interest was evidently in American domestic politics. He asked me a number of questions about the prospects of the autumn elections, the strength of conservatism in the Congress, the power of the John Birch Society, etc. In answer I tried to remind him of the ebb and flow of American politics. ...

Oct 10, Thompson-Dob

T. asked when K was likely to come. Dob said this had not yet been decided in Moscow. When I said the rumors seem to indicate the latter part of November, he added "or early December."

Dob then asked for my personal opinion as to the wisdom of such a visit at this time. ... I went on to say that frequent contacts between the President and Mr K would be helpful as I was convinced that many misunderstandings existed and that at least some of these could be cleared up through closer contact. On the other hand, I said he must be aware of the feeling aroused in this country by developments in Cuba, which did not provide a very good background against which to discuss other questions. I also said I could not observe, in the exchanges which we had had so far, much hope for a successful settlement of the Berlin question.

D. indicated he agreed with this view and said that such a meeting was bound to generate hopes which might result in disappointment. He also mentioned the imminence of American elections.

I pointed out that Sec. Rusk ~~xxx~~ had told Mr. Gromyko that our elections need play no role in negotiations about Berlin, but said that the Republican Party apparently intended to exploit the Cuban issue in the coming campaign, which might further arouse ~~xx~~ public sentiment. Mr. D said purely from the point of view of elections, he assumed that next Fall would be the ideal time for a meeting, but then went on to indicate his own view that early December of this year might be an appropriate time. My impression is that he will recommend against any visit at this time but that if K insists on coming, it should be some time in early December.

Sept. 11 INR memo to Sec on Tass statement

Sov warning to US and promises of support for Cuba came two weeks after Pres publicly announced that the US had no intention of invading Cuba ((see statement to Gromyko, Oct 18)) and one week after he stressed the US view that Soviet weapons being sent to Cuba are defensive in character. Thus Moscow seems to be using its long-standing device of offering to fight when it has been given assurances that it will not have to. ((not quite!)) K's promise of support for Communist China at last June after the Pres and the US Amb in Warsaw had reassured Peiping ~~xxxx~~ and the world at large of US intentions ~~xx~~ are illustrative in this respect.

The warnings and the insistence on the USSR's "right" to protect Cuba are in part offset by Moscow's apparent readiness to wait out the US elections in November before insisting on further negotiations in Germany. Action on a peace treaty, though not necessarily in Berlin itself, is thus postponed again ~~xx~~ until additional negotiations have taken place. This would seem to push the next potential deadline, if any, for a peace treaty into 1963. It may also prove ~~xx~~ to be significant that the statement includes no threat of a separate peace treaty with East Germany should negotiations fail.

Significance of the November date:

The decision to relax pressure ~~xx~~ for a Berlin "settlement" until the November elections supplements a growing list of recent references to November in Soviet/GDR planning on Berlin. (There were, however, intelligence reports as early as April indicating that the Soviets estimated President Kennedy would be unable to negotiate seriously on Berlin until the 1962 congressional elections were out of the way.) There have been several reports--including the most recent GDR defector comments--that operational plans for the Sov and GDR armed forces in Germany, plans seemingly geared to a Berlin move, are scheduled for completion in November. Amb Dobbs' comments to Amb Stevenson that K would not appear at the UN "before mid-November"--if he came--would also seem to fit into this pattern.

Although the specific thrust of Soviet intentions still remain unclear, it would that some new Soviet initiative on Berlin is to come in November or thereabouts, possibly involving an effort to secure a summit meeting between K and Pres.

The ~~xxxx~~ Sov statement is Moscow's first overt move to establish a direct link between the Berlin and Cuban crises.

...statement suggests that Moscow is aware that a drastic heightening of tension simultaneously in Berlin and Cuba may lead to US reactions (especially in the atmosphere of an election campaign) whose consequences might be difficult to control.... Moreover, Moscow may want to leave the inference that US acquiescence in the close Soviet-Cuban relationship... might elicit Soviet restraint in Berlin.

((If you don't provoke Cuban crisis before elections, we won't ~~xxx~~ push Berlin till then--you will have quiet time.))

Oct 6, 1962: Sov Mission, NY. Rusk, Stev, Davis, Hillenbrand,
; Gromyko, Semenov

Sec pointed out that we were prepared to sit down and analyze all questions, both central and peripheral, at any time, so as to see where the points of agreement or disagreement lay. As far as U.S. elections were concerned, the Sec pointed out that our government was in business and there was no need to wait. By direction of the President, the Secretary of State was to stay out of the elections and there was no point in having a crisis by appointment in November. We were prepared to analyze the situation at any time with Mr. Gromyko or through whatever other channel might be profitable.

...Mr. G then recalled the Secretary's remark that there was no need to wait for the November elections and said that he would take note of that statement. While he did not believe that the situation in this respect was as simple as that, he did understand what the Secretary had in mind. On the part of the SU there had never been any lack of readiness to exchange views on the questions the two sides were facing, if the situation really warranted such an exchange.

Oct. 10: Dobrynin-Thompson lunch, 1 pm, Sov Emb.

Oct. 13, Dob.--Stev

Oct 13, Bowles - Dob

(first time they had talked; Bowles leaving for Africa)
(Dob had asked for lunch a week earlier)

Almost immediately Dob brought up the question of Cuba and expressed worry and surprise at the intensity of US public reaction.

In response to his question as to why we attached such importance to a relatively small island, I outlined the history of US-Cuba relations and drew a parallel to the situation in 1898, the presence of Spanish misrule, and the ~~public~~ US public agitation that abetted the outbreak of war.

When he protested that the Soviet presence in Cuba was no greater provocation than the US presence in Turkey, I pointed out that the present Administration had inherited a status quo that had grown up since the war. In some areas the advantage in this status quo had been with us, in others with Moscow; in still others it was a stand-off.

Our presence in Greece and Turkey, for instance, represented our reaction to Stalin's military and political pressures against these two countries following the war. It had become part of a status quo which in all its complexity could safely be changed only by negotiation with reciprocal benefits to each side.

...However, in Cuba the USSR had unilaterally altered this status quo by introducing a wholly new element. Our reaction, in these circumstances, should have been foreseeable.

Moreover, many US students of Sov affairs were soberly convinced that the SU had made this move deliberately to provoke a US military response against Cuba on the theory that this would divert our energies from Berlin, and elsewhere, and enable Sov spokesmen to charge us with aggression in the UN. ((who?))

If this kind of thinking had in fact played a part in the Sov analysis, it was extremely dangerous. If we did move into Cuba in response to some overt act or offensive build-up by the SU, a global chain of events might be set in motion which could have catastrophic consequences.

For instance, the Sovs might then be tempted to take what they would term "counter-action" in Berlin and perhaps Turkey; and the US, by that time in an extremely tense mood, would react with vigor.

The SU, in turn, would feel pressed by the Chinese and other extremists to counter our moves, and we would be on our way together down the long slippery slide.

(discusses the Guns of August) I asked D if he had read 'The Guns of August'. He said, "only a three-page summary." I urged him to read at least the first few chapters in which he would see a pattern of politico-military action and counter-action that could be repeated in the next six months.

In July 1914, men of intelligence in Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary, France and England, all quite conscious of the forces which were feeding the approaching holocaust, found themselves enmeshed in internal pressures, commitments and precedents which left them powerless to avoid the inevitable. It would be the greatest folly in history if we were to repeat this insane process in the nuclear age.

2. Dob. Bowles

Dob asked me what, in the circumstances, I thought could be done in regard to Cuba. Stressing that I was speaking solely as an individual, I suggested three moves that the SU could sponsor to ease the situation.

1. Dob should remind his Government of Pres Kennedy's sharp distinction between defensive and offensive weapons in his recent statement. I was particularly concerned on this point because current reports indicated that Sov shipments were in fact beginning to include weapons which had a clearly offensive capacity.

If this continued, it could produce--with the help of some incident perpetrated perhaps by individuals striving to provoke another "Remember the Maine" incident--the very conflict which the Administration is anxious to avoid. Pres Kennedy had committed himself to act under certain specific circumstances. This was a clear commitment, and the SU should not take it lightly.

2. From many reports, Castro now had ample defensive arms with which to protect himself from casual landings. The SU should tell him that under present circumstances no more arms will be shipped. The SU should then ask Castro himself to make a statement announcing that the defense of Cuba was assured and that no more arms were needed. Moscow could then inform us that no more arms would be shipped.

3. Castro should be asked by Moscow to state that he has no design on his neighbors...

To all of this D appeared to listen intently. I believe he was impressed.

He answered that in spite of our worries, the USSR was not shipping offensive weapons and well understood the dangers of doing so. Moreover, it was unreasonable for the US, as a major power, to expect a small weak country such as Cuba to make such public concessions to US public opinion even though both the SU and Cuba might accept all three points in principle.

Why, he asked repeatedly, do we get so excited about so small a nation?...

I commented...If Dob were misinformed about the types of weapons now arriving in Cuba, it would not be the first time in diplomatic history that this had occurred.

... In the course of his many questions and comments, D stressed what he called the Sov Gov's desire for better understanding, its inability to fathom US public opinion, its irritation over the fact that we are constantly saying "wait until after the election--and you are always having elections," ((so far as I have seen, US never brought this up; SU always did. Were they telling Dob that we were obsessed with this? Who believed it in Moscow? Were we bringing it up, in other talks?)) its concern over its own internal needs, and its rejection of my thesis that the USSR, Cuba or someone else should make all the concessions."

...Our reactions to Cuba appear to have surprised him, and he is frankly at a loss now to explain them. He returned to this question again and again.

((Then, suppose he had known of plans; would he have predicted strong US reaction, advised against them?))

Presumably, by Oct 13 B knew of 11-20's and was referring to them (published on 11 Oct); presumably he would not have known (?) of reports on missiles.

D's assurance, in context, is pretty definite. B's comment is the only one I saw where anyone even raised the possibility that D might not know; though this took place after Oct 11, by which time D's comment appeared definitely wrong.

If reported immediately, B's proposal would have suggested: We will accept 11-20's, -if you don't send any more.

(memo sent to Pres when written, on Oct 14.)

(only assurances in Aug and Sept influenced Pres reaction up to Sept 13; Dob-Sorenson Aug 23 and Sept 6; Dob-Stevenson Sept 6

Kohler-Khrushchev, 16 Oct

K: US has bases in countries neighboring USSR, such as Turkey, as well as in Greece, Italy, France, West Germany and Pakistan. But USSR does not attack these countries. If US thinks it has right to do as it likes about Cuba, why hasn't USSR right to do as it likes about these countries? If we acted that way, might would make right. UN charter would lose its force. That would be policy of banditry. Cuba is small; US is big. "You are so afraid of Cuba, you almost lost your pants." US is located in Western Hemisphere; what is it doing in Eastern Hemisphere? USSR does not recognize right of US to be everywhere in world and to rule everywhere. It was one thing when US was very powerful, but now there is a force as great as yours.

...Kon: took note of Chairman's remarks. Pres has made it clear we are not going to interfere in Cuba by force. But we are not going to help Cuba, which does not mean we intend to interfere there.

Reverting to Cuba, K said he wished to assure Pres that port regarding which Sovs had signed agreement was just a fishing port. "I give you my word." He said he would reveal a state secret. While he was away, they had signed agreement without consulting him. When he came back he cursed them and said they should have waited until after US elections. Japanese fish off Brazil and have a base there where fish are processed. Cubans couldn't build port themselves so Sovs decided to help them. But agreement had been signed at wrong time. If they had asked him, he would have said sign it November 10 or 15, because he knew it would provide fuel to Republicans who are frying President at the moment. Since Soviets value good relations with President, they could have waited to sign. (Kuznetsov changed "signed" to "published" when interpreter translated this).

Kon: thanked him for these remarks and said I thought Pres would be glad to hear them.

K: perhaps Pres would think he had concluded this agreement on purpose just to "put a little salt in his wound." Koh: said I believed Pres was a little surprised.

K said, "And rightfully so," adding that when Soviets do a silly thing they recognize it as such, but Americans don't.

K then said that perhaps after elections he would meet Pres in New York and they would reach agreement on nuclear-test ban.

...After this problem, most important is question of Germany-Berlin. ...Some people say that he has told foreign delegations that Pres did not dare to start a war, but they interpret him wrongly. He does not want to say something offensive to Pres and his remarks have been distorted. When he talks with foreigners, he says Soviets will sign a peace treaty, with all the consequences that would follow, and he also says that any war would inevitably grow into nuclear war. Consequently, anyone who would start a war would be either a lunatic or a coward.

...We will sign a peace treaty, but no one who is sane will start a war.

...US elections will take place, and then we'll try to renew dialogue and reach agreement. Sovs won't sign peace treaty immediately; they know unilateral signing would be aggravation.

over

K-K

2.

K said probably he would travel to UNGA at end November. Early in Nov, he would be busy with domestic problems. If situation were favorable then, he would be glad to meet with Pres. He had good recollections meeting with Pres. Then perhaps they could: 1) agree on test ban, which he would like to do; 2) exchange views on disarmament; and 3) he would also like to agree on West Berlin and create a calmer atmosphere for disarmament. For time being, Soviets would do nothing and make no statements until elections. He had given his word on that.

Koh: said I would hope meanwhile there would be no developments which would make a meeting difficult. (mentioned Gromyko was to see Pres day after tomorrow).

K repeated that they would not undertake anything to worsen relations. He regretted that things had not worked out in accordance with his discussion with Amb Thompson. It was regrettable that Cuban question had blown up right in middle of election campaign.

(K noted that he had not known earlier that appointment was fixed for Gromyko with Pres. I said we had just learned this today. K said he was glad and thanked Pres for finding time to receive G).

K asked me to convey best wishes to Pres and hope that he would have success in election campaign, as well as wishes for good health and success to his family, his wife and mother.

(Koh note: clear ~~is~~ that he has as of now made basic decision to make the trip.)

Gromyko--JFK, Oct 18, 5 pm (Pres, SecState, Thompson, Hillenbrand;
Gromyko, Semenov, Dobrynin)

Mr. G then said that the Soviet Government had already indicated that it would do nothing with regard to West Berlin before the US elections, unless it was compelled to do otherwise by the activities of the other side. However, the Sov Gov proceeded from the fact that it was necessary to hold an active dialogue in November to bring about concrete results with regard to a German peace treaty and to the normalization of the West Berlin situation on the basis of such a treaty. The Sov Gov would like to hope that at that time an understanding concerning a German peace treaty...would at last be reached. If there should be no such understanding, the Soviet Government would be compelled, and Mr G wished to emphasize the word "compelled", to sign, together with a number of other states, a peace treaty with the GDR without an understanding with the Western Powers. The SU would also be compelled to take such steps as were integrally linked with a peace settlement, steps of which the US and the Pres personally had been informed on a number of occasions, including by Mr K personally.

...G : the Pres had said that if the Sov proposal were to be accepted ((without US troops)) West Berlin would ~~maxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ come under the control of the GDR and that the social order of West Berlin would be threatened by this. Mr G asserted that there was no reason for such fears, or doubts, or suspicions, because the USSR was prepared to undertake solemn guarantees, together with the US and the other Western Powers and also with the UN, ensuring respect for the status of West Berlin. He professed not to be able to understand why the Pres believed that the collective weight and prestige of those nations or the weight and prestige of the UN would not constitute sufficient guarantees of what the President called the freedom of West Berlin. ((This on Oct 18!))

...Pres emphasized that if the SU desired to continue to permit the people of West Berlin to choose their fate, he did not see why withdrawal of Western forces was of any importance. ...West Berlin was not a NATO base and our troops there were symbolic. ...a symbolic guarantee of the freedom of the city.

...

...(K believed Heads of State should meet to discuss the problems which were dividing the two Powers, and first and foremost the question of a German peace treaty and of West Berlin. If Mr. K should have an opportunity of doing so, he would come to New York in the latter part of November in connection with General Assembly. Thus, what was meant was the possibility of K's coming after the US elections.

2.

G proceeded with prepared text on Cuba.

...For quite some time there had been an unabated anti-Cuban campaign in the US, a campaign which was apparently backed by the USG. Now the USG wished to institute a blockade against trade with Cuba, and there had also been some talk of organized piracy under the aegis of United States. All this could lead only to great misfortunes for mankind. The USG seemed to believe that the Cubans must settle their internal affairs not at their own discretion, but at the discretion of the US. Yet Cuba belonged to Cubans and not to the US. If this was so, why then statements were being made in the US advocating invasion of Cuba? What did the US want to do with Cuba? What could Cuba do to the US?

... All international problems must be resolved by negotiation between the states concerned. After all, the US and USSR were now negotiating and making statements which should be given credence. Was it not sufficient for Cuba to state that it wished negotiations and a solution of existing problems on a mutually acceptable basis?

Mr. G said he knew the Pres appreciated frankness. Mr. K's conversation with the Pres at Vienna had been frank and therefore, with the Pres's permission, he himself wished to be frank, too. The situation today could not be compared to that obtaining in the middle of the 19th century. Modern times were not the same as those when colonies had been divided among colonial powers. Modern times could not be compared to those when it took weeks or months for the voice of the attacked to be heard. Statements had been made that the US was a powerful and great nation; this was true, but what kind of a nation was the USSR? Mr K had been favorably impressed with the President's statement at Vienna regarding the equality of forces of our two nations. Since this was so, i.e., since the USSR was also a great and strong nation, it could not stand by as a mere observer when aggression was planned and when a threat of war was looming. The USG was surely aware of the SU's attitude toward the recent call-up of 150,000 Reservists in the US.

((What had led to that?)) The SG believed that if both sides were for relaxation of international tensions and for solving the outstanding international problems, such demonstrations could be designed only for the purpose of increasing tensions and should therefore be avoided. If worse should come to worse and if war should occur, then surely 150,000 soldiers would be of no significance. As the Pres was surely aware, today was not 1812, when Napoleon had relied on the number of soldiers, sabres and rifles. Neither could today's situation be compared to 1941, when Hitler had relied on the number of tanks and guns. Today, life itself and military technology had created an entirely different situation, where it was better not to rely on arms. As to Soviet assistance to Cuba, Mr G stated that he was instructed to make it clear, as the Sov Gov had already done, that such assistance, pursued solely for the purpose of contributing to the defense capabilities of Cuba and to the development of Cuba, toward the development of its agriculture and land amelioration, and training by Sov specialists of Cuban nationals in handling defensive armaments were by no means offensive. If it were otherwise, the Sov Gov would have never become involved in rendering such assistance.

3. G-JFK

Pres said he was glad that Mr. G had referred to Laos because he believed that the Sov policy on that problem was as Mr. G described it. So far the SU had apparently met its obligations just as the US had met them. However, a most serious mistake had been made last summer with respect to Cuba. The US had not pressed the Cuban problem and had attempted to push it aside although of course a number of people in this country opposed the regime now prevailing in Cuba and there were many refugees coming to this country. However, there was no intention to invade Cuba. But then last July the USSR, without any communication from Mr. K to the Pres, had embarked upon the policy of supplying arms to Cuba. The Pres said he did not know the reasons for that shift in Sov policy, because there was no threat of invasion and he would have been glad to give appropriate assurances to that effect had Mr. K communicated with him. Sov arms supply had a profound impact in the United States; Amb Dobrynin was surely aware of how the American people and the Congress felt on this matter. The admin had tried to calm this reaction and he, the Pres, had made a statement that in view of the nature of Sov assistance to Cuba at this time coolness was required. Yet, the Pres said, he wished to stress that Sov actions were extremely serious and he could find no satisfactory explanation for them. The Sov Union was surely aware of US feelings with regard to Cuba, which was only 90 miles away from the US. The Pres continued that the US planned no blockade of Cuba; it was only a question of snips taking arms to Cuba not being able to stop in the US with their return cargo. Thus a very unfortunate situation had developed. The Pres said he did not know where it was taking us but it was the most dangerous situation since the end of the war. The US had taken the Sov statement concerning the nature of the armaments supplied to Cuba at its face value. ((How strong was influence of these statements on our beliefs?)) He, the Pres, had attacked last Sunday in Indianapolis a Senator who was advocating invasion, ((see)) and he had stated that the Cuban problem must be kept in perspective. The Pres reiterated that this was a dangerous situation, and said he did not know where the USSR planned to have it end.

Mr. G said that there had already been an invasion, and it was well known how it ended. It was well known now, both from facts and statements, including the President's own, under what circumstances and by whom that invasion had been organized. ...

The Pres interjected that he had discussed with Mr. K the April, 1961 invasion and had said that it was a mistake. He also pointed out he would have given assurances that there would be no further invasion, either by refugees or by US forces. But last July the SU took certain actions and the situation changed.

...Mr. G continued... also, as far as armaments were concerned, Soviet specialists were training Cubans in handling certain types of armaments which were only defensive--and he wished to stress the word defensive--in character, and thus such training could not constitute a threat to the US. He reiterated that if it were otherwise the SU would never have agreed to render such assistance.

4.

The Pres said that in order to be clear on this Cuban problem he wanted to state the following. The US had no ~~intention~~ intention of invading Cuba. Introduction last July of intensive armaments had complicated the situation and created grave danger. His own actions had been to prevent, unless US security was endangered, anything from being done that might provoke the danger of war. The Pres then read a portion of his Sept 4 statement on Cuba and stated that this had been US position and policy on this question. He noted that the Attorney General had discussed the Cuban situation with Amb Dob so that the latter must be aware of what it was. The Pres again recalled his Indianapolis speech of Sunday ((see)) and said that we were basing our present attitude on facts as they had been described by Mr. Gromyko; our presumption was that the armaments supplied by the USSR were defensive.

Mr. G stated the SU proceeded from the assumption that on basis of SG's statements and his own today the US Gov and the Pres had a clear idea of the Sov policy on this matter and of the Sov evaluation of US action in relation to Cuba. He said he had nothing to add to what he had already said.

...(end) The Pres emphasized that neither he nor Mr. K must take actions leading to a confrontation of our two countries. ...What was inexplicable in the light of what he had thought to be Mr. K's understanding of the US was what now happened in Cuba since July. Since Laos, that particular situation had been the most serious one.

ended at 7:20

Oct 22: Sec called Amb Dob in at 6 pm. (Dob ~~was~~ read letter from Pres to K and copy of address which Pres would make at 7; asked whether letter from Pres would be published and was told that the USG has no intention of ~~publishing~~ publishing at this time of publishing it and would inform Sovs if this decision were changed.) Sec said that he had not been instructed to add any comments and that the speech was self-explanatory. Speaking informally, the Sec said that it was incomprehensible to him how the leaders in Moscow could make such a gross error of judgment as to what the US could accept. He expressed the hope that the SU would make a major effort to correct the situation.

Dob said that "all of this" was unjustifiable and would very strongly aggravate the international situation. He said that he would report the messages and the conversation promptly.
(present: Guthrie, Baraz)

My dear friend: We are now in possession of incontrovertible military letters to Macmillan, de Gaulle, and Acheson (drafted by Johnson)

Indisputable evidence that the Soviets have already installed offensive nuclear missiles in Cuba, and that some of these may already be operational. This constitutes a threat to the peace not only of this hemisphere but of the entire free world.

(to Mac: You will recall that last month I stated publicly that the Government of the US would consider the presence of ground-to-ground missiles in Cuba as an offensive threat. In response to my remarks, the Soviets stated that such armaments and military equipment as had been shipped by them to Cuba were exclusively of a defensive nature, and this was repeated to me only last Thursday by Gromyko under instructions.)

The foregoing has created a highly critical situation which must be met promptly and fearlessly.

...I am quite clear in my mind that these missiles have got to be withdrawn,...

The object of the quarantine, which will be put into effect immediately, is to prevent the SU from introducing additional missiles into Cuba and to lead to the elimination of the missiles that are already in place.

...I need not point out to you the possible relation of this secret and dangerous move on the part of Khrushchev to Berlin. We must together be prepared for a time of testing.

...This is a solemn moment for our two countries, indeed for the fate of the entire world. It is essential that the already great dangers before us should not be increased through miscalculation or underestimating by the Soviets of what we intend to do, and are prepared to endure, in the face of the course on which they have so recklessly embarked.

Oct 21, 7:41 pm (Thompson drafter)
deliver one hour before speech, 7 pm Oct 22

Sir:

There is attached a copy of the statement I am making tonight ((change to: A copy of the statement I am making tonight concerning developments in Cuba and the reaction of my Government thereto has been handed to your Ambassador in Washington (prefer that K not have immediately available full text of statement: Oct 22, 8:1 pm))

. In view of the gravity of developments to which I refer, I want you to know immediately and accurately the position of my Government on this matter.

In our discussions and exchanges on Berlin and other international questions, the one thing that has most concerned me has been the possibility that your Government would not correctly understand the will and determination of the US in any given situation, since I have not assumed that you or any other sane man would, in this nuclear age, deliberately plunge the world into war which it is crystal clear no country could win and which could only result in catastrophic consequences to the whole world, including the aggressor.

At our meeting in Vienna and subsequently, I expressed our readiness and desire to find, through peaceful negotiation, a solution to any and all problems that divide us. At the same time, I made it clear that in view of the objectives of the ideology to which you adhere, the US could not tolerate any action on your part which in a major way disturbed the existing over-all balance of power in the world. I stated that an attempt to force abandonment of our responsibilities and commitments in Berlin would constitute such an action and that the US would resist with all the power at its command.

It was in order to avoid any incorrect assessment on the part of your Government with respect to Cuba that I publicly stated that if certain developments in Cuba took place, the US would do whatever must be done to protect its own security and that of its allies. Moreover, the Congress adopted a resolution expressing its support of this declared policy. Despite this, the rapid development of long-range missile bases and other offensive weapons systems in Cuba has proceeded. I must tell you that the US is determined to remove this threat to the security of this hemisphere.

((change, Oct 22, 9:56 am: I must tell you that the US is determined that this threat to the security of this hemisphere be removed.))

At the same time, I wish to point out that the action we are taking is the minimum necessary to remove the threat to the security of the nations of this hemisphere. The fact of this minimum response should not be taken as a basis, however, for any misjudgement on your part.

I hope that your Government will refrain from any action which would widen or deepen this already grave crisis and that we can agree to resume the path of peaceful negotiation.

Oct 23; received 11:50 am
(Kuznetsov informed Kohler letter would not be published "for the time being.")

Mr. President.

I have just received your letter, and have also acquainted myself with text of your speech of October 22 regarding Cuba.

I would say frankly that measures outlined in your statement represent serious threat to peace and security of peoples. US has openly taken path of gross violation of charter of UN, path of violation of international norms of freedom of navigation on high seas, path of aggressive actions both against Cuba and against SU.

Statement of Government of US cannot be evaluated in any other way than as naked interference in domestic affairs of Cuban republic, SU, and other states. Charter of UN and international norms do not give right to any state whatsoever to establish in international waters control of vessels bound for shores of Cuban Republic.

It is self-understood that we also cannot recognize right of US to establish control over armaments essential to Republic of Cuba for strengthening of its defensive capacity.

We confirm that armaments now on Cuba, regardless of classification to which they belong, are destined exclusively for defensive purposes, in order to secure Cuban Republic from attack of aggressor.

I hope that Government of US will show prudence and renounce actions pursued by you, which could lead to catastrophic consequences for peace throughout world.

Viewpoint of Soviet Government with regard to your statement of Oct 22 is set forth in statement of Soviet Government which is being conveyed ~~through~~ to you through your ambassador in Moscow.

Oct 23, 6:51 pm

Dear Mr. Chairman :

I have received your letter of Oct 23. I think you will recognize that the steps which started the current chain of events was the action of your Government in secretly furnishing offensive weapons to Cuba. We will be discussing this matter in the Security Council. In the meantime, I am concerned that we both show prudence and do nothing to allow events to make the situation more difficult to control than it already is.

I hope that you will issue immediately the necessary instructions to your ships to observe the terms of the quarantine, the basis of which was established by the vote of the OAS this afternoon, and which will go into effect at 1400 hours Greenwich time Oct 24. Sincerely,

Soviet Government statement, Oct 25

...The Sov Gov emphasizes once again that all weapons in the Soviet Union's possession are serving and will serve the purposes of defence against aggressors. Under existing international conditions, the presence of powerful weapons, including nuclear rocket weapons, in the Soviet Union is acknowledged by all the peoples in the world to be the decisive factor in deterring the aggressive forces of imperialism from unleashing a world war of annihilation.

...
The US Government accuses Cuba of creating a threat to the security of the US. But who is going to believe that Cuba can be a threat to the US? If we think of the respective size and resources of the two countries, of their armaments, no statesman in his right mind can imagine for one moment that Cuba can be a threat to the US or to any other country. It is hypocritical, to say the least, to say that little Cuba may encroach on the security of the USA.

((But suppose they put 200 missiles there. Sovs could easily and quickly put more MRBMs into Cuba than US had ICBMs or Polaris. Sovs were not being reassuring as to numbers. T

Were we considering question of numbers or significance?))

((If all weapons of SU are "defensive," then what is information content of statements that SU was putting "only" defensive weapons there? What was being ruled out? Form of statements certainly implied that something was being said about type of weapons, in response to US distinctions.

If ICBMs in SU are deterrent to aggression against Cuba, why need MRBMs in Cuba--especially controlled by Soviets?))

With regard to the SU's assistance to Cuba, this assistance is exclusively designed to improve Cuba's defensive capacity. As was stated on 3 September 1962...the SG has responded to the Cuban Government's request to help Cuba with arms. The communique states that such arms and military equipment are intended solely for defensive purposes. ((check))

...The US is demanding that the military equipment Cuba needs for its own defense should be withdrawn from its territory, a step to which no State prizing its independence can, of course, agree.

Dowling to SecState, Oct 24, 11 am (received 2 6:02 am Oct 24)

Acheson and I spent almost two hours with Chancellor late yesterday. He had obviously ~~repeatedly~~ reflected further on course of action re Cuba announced by President and had concluded it would be insufficient to check Soviets. He did not at first say so, however, but after indicating his support for and confidence in the President, urged that we do more to create greater unrest in Cuba. Despite Acheson's explanation of how difficult this would be under Castro's police system, Chancellor pursued discussion at length, in course of which he referred to telegram from German UN observer explaining limited nature of US quarantine action, and said we should consider all possible actions for elimination of Castro regime and Soviet influence in Cuba, including rapid tightening of quarantine restrictions.

Acheson eventually moved discussion away from question of unrest in Cuba by explaining courses of action which had been available to President and why reasons why current policy was decided upon. Adenauer listened most attentively, and at end seemed reassured but he was obviously still convinced of necessity for further firm measures at early date to achieve our purposes. He ended by saying, "Above all, no paper war."

Oct 24, 1962 9:24 pm

Dear Mr. Pres.

I have received your letter of October 23, familiarized myself with it and am answering you.

Imagine, Mr. President, that we had posed to you those ultimative conditions which you have posed to us by your action. How would you have reacted to this? I think that you would have been indignant at such a step on our part. And that would have been comprehensible to us.

Having posed these conditions to us, you, Mr. President, have challenged us. Who asked you to do this? By what right have you done this? Our relations with the Republic of Cuba, like our relations with other states, regardless of what sort of state it may be, concern only the two countries between which those relations exist. And if one is really going to talk about a quarantine, referred to in your letter, it can be established according to accepted international practice, only by the agreement of states between themselves, and not by any sort of third party, there exist, for example, quarantines on agricultural goods and products, but in the case at hand, the question is in no way one of quarantine, but rather of far more serious things, and you yourself understand this.

You, Mr. President, are not declaring quarantines, but advancing an ultimatum and threatening that unless we subordinate ourselves to your demands, you will use force. Consider what you are saying! And you wish to convince me to agree to this! What does agreement with such demands mean? This would mean to guide oneself in one's relations with other countries not by reason but to indulge arbitrariness. You are no longer appealing to reason, but wish to intimidate us.

And, Mr. President, I cannot agree with this and think that in your heart you recognize that I am correct. I am convinced that in my place you would act the same way.

Reference to the decision of the Organization of American States cannot in any way substantiate the demands now advanced by the US. This organization has absolutely no authority or basis to make decisions like that of which you speak in your letter.

Consequently, we do not recognize these decisions. International law exists, generally recognized norms of conduct exist. We firmly support the principles of international law, strictly observe the norms regulating navigation on the high seas and in international waters. We observe these norms and enjoy the rights recognized by all states.

You wish to compel us to renounce the rights that every sovereign state enjoys, you are attempting to legislate in questions of international law, you are trampling upon the generally accepted norms of this law. And all this not only out of hatred for the

Cuban people and its government, but also as a consideration
result of considerations of the election campaign in the US.
What morality, what law can justify such an approach by the American
government to international affairs? You cannot find such a morality
and such a law, because the actions of the USA with regard to Cuba
are outright banditry, or, if you like, the folly of degenerate
imperialism. Unfortunately, the peoples of all countries, and at least
of all the American people, can suffer gravely from such folly, since
the USA has fully lost its former inaccessibility with the advent
of contemporary types of armament.

Consequently, Mr. President, if you coolly weigh the situation
which has developed, not giving way to passions, then you will
understand that the Soviet Union cannot fail to reject the arbitrary
demands of the USA. When you confront us with such conditions, try
to put yourself in our situation and think how the USA would react
to these conditions. I do not doubt that if someone had attempted
to dictate conditions of this sort to you, the USA, you would have
rejected such an attempt. And we also say--No.

The Sov Government considers that violation of freedom of the
sea of international waters and international air space is an
act of aggression, pushing mankind towards the abyss of a world
missile-nuclear war. Consequently, the Sov Gov cannot give instructions
to the captains of Soviet vessels bound for Cuba to observe the instructions
of the American naval forces blockading that island. Your
instructions to Soviet mariners are strictly to observe the generally
recognized norms of navigation in international waters and not to
retreat from them by even one step. And if the American side
violates these rules, it must realize what sort of responsibility
will rest upon it in that case. Of course, we shall not be simply
observers of piratical actions of American ships on the high seas.
We will then be forced for our part to take the measures which we
deem necessary and adequate in order to protect our rights. For
this we have all that is necessary.

3.

Oct 25, 1962

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I have received your letter of October 24, and I regret very much that you still do not appear to understand what it is that has moved us in this matter.

The sequence of events is clear. In August there were reports of important shipments of military equipment and technicians from the Soviet Union to Cuba. In early September I indicated very plainly that the US would regard any shipment of offensive weapons as presenting the gravest issues. After that time, this Government received the most explicit assurances from your Government and its representatives, both publicly and privately, that no offensive weapons were being sent to Cuba. If you will review the statement issued by Tass in September, you will see how clearly this assurance was given.

In reliance on these solemn assurances I urged restraint upon those in this country who were urging action in this matter at that time. And then I learned beyond doubt what you have not denied--namely, that all these public assurances were false and that your military people had set out recently to establish a set of missile bases in Cuba. I ask you to recognize clearly, Mr. Chairman, that it was not I who issued the first challenge in this case, and that in the light of ~~this~~ this record these activities in Cuba required the responses I have announced.

I repeat my regret that these events should cause a deterioration in our relations. I hope that your Government will take the necessary action to permit a restoration of the earlier situation.

Sincerely yours,

Oct 26, 1962: On K's conversation with W.E. Knox, Westinghouse Electrical International, Moscow, Oct. 24.

(conversation including Davis, Guthrie, Sheridan, Sonnenfeldt)

1. K was loath to think that what occurred on Oct 22 was done for electoral reasons. It appeared to stem from hysteria. The President was very young man; in fact K's own son was older. K had had his differences with Eisenhower but was confident that Eisenhower would have done things differently. ((! Why? How? note E recommendations))

2. Except in time of war a blockade is illegal. If the US stopped and searched Sov ships, this would be piracy.

3. K repeated several times that Sov ships were unarmed, that some may turn around and that some would be stopped, but sooner or later the SU would send its submarines to sink the ships that were stopping the Sov ships.

4. The US is now unable to take over Cuba.

b. To Mr. Knox's comment that the President was infuriated because he had been assured that the SU would not send offensive weapons to Cuba and found that he had been lied to, K replied with a half hour discussion on the distinction between offensive and defensive weapons. ((Did he deny lying?)) The US said that its Turkish bases were defensive but what was the range of the missiles there.

c. K then stated specifically that the SU had an anti-aircraft missile in Cuba as well as ballistic missiles with both conventional and nuclear warheads. The Cubans were too temperamental to turn over these weapons to them; for this reason all sophisticated military equipment were under direct, 100 percent Soviet control. They would never be fired except in defense of Cuba and then only on the personal instructions from K as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. K added that if the US did not believe this it should attack Cuba and it would find out the answer. Guantanamo would disappear the first day.

((Note: significance of snootdown on 27 Oct in light of K's emphasis here and Oct 27 morning on his personal, and Soviet's responsibility'. Also, concern for "temperamental" Cubans; and report that Mikoyan was representing concern for their action after Oct 26))

7. K would like to talk with the President. He had planned to attend the UN this fall, but the UN is a place for arguing, not a place for negotiating. He would be delighted to visit the Pres or for the Pres to visit him or a rendezvous at sea or anywhere else. A summit was desirable and it should not be a circus.

c. What occurred on Oct 22 was particularly disappointing because Rusk and Gromyko had practically agreed on the nuclear test problem, on the Polish-German and Czech-German frontier, and on non-dissemination of hostile propaganda in both East and West Berlin.

9 K told his familiar story about a man who had learned to get along with a smelly goat even though he did not like the goat. The SU had its goats in Italy, Greece, etc. and was living with them. The US now had its goat in Cuba.

Oct 26, 1962. delivered to Embassy 4:45 pm Moscow time; translated by Embassy; sent 7 pm Moscow time; received 6 pm Wash time; first part relayed to White House 6:30 pm. Second part received 6:27, relayed WH 8:45. Third part received 6:23, relayed WH 8:45 (apparent offer); Fourth part received 9 pm, relayed 9:15 (more specific offer)

Dear Mr. President:

I have received your letter of Oct 25. From your letter, I got the feeling that you have some understanding of the situation which has developed and some sense of responsibility. I value this.

Now we have publicly exchanged our evaluations of the events around Cuba and each of us has set forth his explanation and his understanding of these events. Consequently, I would judge that, apparently, a continuation of an exchange of opinions at such a distance, even in the form of secret letters, will hardly add anything to that which one side has already said to the other.

I think you will understand me correctly if you are really concerned about the welfare of the world. Everyone needs peace: both capitalists, if they have not lost their reason, and, still more, communists. People who know how to value not only their own lives but, more than anything, the lives of the peoples. We, communists, are against all wars between states in general and have been defending the cause of peace since we came into the world. We have always regarded war as a calamity, and not as a game nor as a means for the attainment of definite goals. Nor, all the more, as a goal in itself. Our goals are clear, and the means to attain them is labor. War is our enemy, and a calamity for all the peoples.

It is thus that we, Soviet people, and together with us, other peoples as well, understand the questions of war and peace. I can, in any case, firmly say this for the peoples of the Socialist countries, as well as for all progressive people who want peace, happiness, and friendship among peoples.

I see, Mr. President, that you too are not devoid of a sense of anxiety for the fate of the world, of understanding, and of what war entails. What would a war give you? You are threatening us with war. But you well know that the very least which you would receive in reply would be that you would experience the same consequences as those which you sent us. And that must be clear to us, people invested the authority, trust, and responsibility. We must not succumb to intoxication and petty passions, regardless of whether elections are impending in this or that country, or not impending. These are all transient things, but if indeed war should break out, then it would not be in our power to stop it, for such is the logic of war. I have participated in two wars and know that war ends when it has rolled through cities and villages, everywhere sowing death and destruction.

In the name of the Soviet government and the Soviet people, I

4.
I assure you that your conclusions regarding offensive weapons on Cuba are groundless. It is apparent from you have written me that our conceptions are different on this score, or rather, we have different estimates of these or those military means. Indeed, in reality, the same kinds of weapons can have different interpretations.

You are a military man and, I hope, will understand me. Let us take for example a simple cannon. What sort of means is this: offensive or defensive? A cannon is a defensive means if it is set up to defend boundaries or a fortified area. But if one concentrates artillery, and adds to it the necessary number of troops, then the same cannons do become an offensive means, because they prepare and clear the way for infantry to attack. The same happens with missile-nuclear weapons as well, with any type of this weapon.

((This cuts both ways: i.e., against Sov assertion that missiles were "defensive," as well.))

You are mistaken if you think that any of our means on Cuba are offensive. However, let us not quarrel now. It is apparent that I will not be able to convince you of this. But I say to you: you, Mr. President, are a military man and should understand: can one attack, if one has on one's territory even an enormous quantity of missiles of various effective radiuses and various power, but using only these means. These missiles are a means of extermination and destruction. But one cannot attack with these missiles, even nuclear missiles of a power of 100 megatons because only people, troops, can attack. Without people, any means however powerful cannot be offensive.

How can one, consequently, give such a completely incorrect interpretation as you are now giving, to the effect that some sort of means on Cuba are offensive. All the means located there, and I assure you of this, have a defensive character, are on Cuba solely for the purpose of defense, and we have sent them to Cuba ~~only~~ at the request of the Cuban government. You, however, say that these are offensive means.

Second part:

But, Mr. President, do you really seriously think that Cuba can attack the US and that even we together with Cuba can attack you from the territory of Cuba? Can you really think that way? How is it possible? We do not understand this. Has something so new appeared in military strategy that one can think that it is possible to attack ~~us~~. I say precisely attack, and not destroy, since barbarians, people who have lost their sense, destroy.

I believe that you have no basis to think this way. You can regard us with distrust, but in any case, you can be calm in this regard, that we are of sound mind and understand perfectly well that if we attack you, you will respond the same way. But you too will receive the same that you hurl against us. And I think that you also ~~think~~ understand this. My conversation with you in Vienna gives me the right to talk to you this way.

of a defensive character to protect our interests in accordance with international law. Why should this be done? To what would all this lead?

Let us normalize relations. We have received an appeal from the Acting Secretary General of the UN, U Thant, with his proposals. I have already answered him. His proposals come to this, that our side should not transport armaments of any kind to Cuba during a certain period of time, while negotiations are being conducted--and we are ready to enter such negotiations--and the other side should not undertake any sort of piratical actions against vessels engaged in navigation on the high seas. I consider these proposals reasonable. This would be a way out of the situation which has been created, which would give the peoples the possibility of breathing calmly. You have asked what happened, what evoked the delivery of weapons to Cuba? You have spoken about this to your Minister of Foreign Affairs. I will tell you frankly, Mr. President, what evoked it.

We were very grieved by the fact--I spoke about it in Vienna--that a landing took place, that an attack on Cuba was committed, as a result of which many Cubans perished. You yourself told me then that this had been a mistake. I respected that explanation. You repeated it to me several times, pointing out that not everybody occupying a high position would acknowledge his mistakes as you had done. I value such frankness. For my part, I told you that we too possess no less courage; we also acknowledged those mistakes which had been committed during the history of our state, and not only acknowledged, but sharply condemned them.

If you are really concerned about the peace and welfare of your people, and this is your responsibility as President, as I, as the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, am concerned for my people. Moreover, the preservation of world peace should be our joint concern, since if, under contemporary conditions, war should break out, it would be a war not only between the reciprocal claims, but a world wide cruel and destructive war.

Why have we proceeded to assist Cuba with military and economic aid? The answer is: we have proceeded to do so only for reasons of humanitarianism. At one time, our people itself had a revolution, when Russia was still a backward country. We were attacked then. We were the target of attack by many countries. The USA participated in that adventure. This has been recorded by participants in the aggression against our country. A whole book has been written about this by General Graves, who, at that time, commanded the US expeditionary corps. Graves called it "The American Adventure in Siberia."

We know how difficult it is to accomplish a revolution and how difficult it is to reconstruct a country on new foundations. We sincerely sympathize with Cuba and the Cuban people, but we are not interfering in questions of domestic structure, we are not interfering in their affairs. The SU desires to help the Cubans build their life as they themselves wish and that others should not hinder them.

You once said that the US was not preparing an invasion. But you also admitted that you sympathized with the Cuban counterrevolutionary emigrants, that you support them and would help them to realize their plans against the present government of Cuba. It is also not a secret to anyone that the threat of arm & attack, aggression, has constantly hung, and continues to hang over Cuba. It was only this which impelled us to respond to the request of the Cuban government to furnish it aid for the strengthening of the defensive capacity of this country.

If assurances were given by the President and the government of the US that the USA itself would not participate in an attack on Cuba and would restrain others from actions of this sort, if you would recall your fleet, this would immediately change everything. I am not speaking for Fidel Castro, but I think that he and the government of Cuba, evidently, would declare demobilization and would appeal to the people to get down to peaceful labor. Then, too, the question of armaments would disappear, since, if there is no threat, then armaments are a burden for every people. Then, too, the question of the destruction, not only of the armaments, which you call offensive, but of all other armaments as well, would look different.

I spoke in the name of the Soviet government in the UN and introduced a proposal for the disarmament of all armies and for the destruction of all armaments. Now then can I now count on those armaments? Armaments bring only disasters. When one accumulates them, this damages the economy, and if one puts them to use, then they destroy people on both sides. Consequently, only a mad man can believe that armaments are the principal means in the life of society. No, they are an enforced loss of human energy, and what is more are for the destruction of man himself. If people do not show wisdom, then in the final analysis they will come to a crash, like blind moles, and then reciprocal extermination will begin.

Let us therefore show statesmanlike wisdom. I propose: we for our part, will declare that our ships, bound for Cuba, will not carry any kind of armaments. You would declare that the US will not invade Cuba with its forces and will not support any sort of forces which might intend to carry out an invasion of Cuba. Then the necessity for the presence of our military specialists in Cuba would disappear.

Mr. President, I appeal to you to weigh well what the aggressive piratical actions, which you have declared the USA intends to carry out in international waters, would lead to. You yourself know that any sensible man simply cannot agree with this, cannot recognize your right to such actions.

6.

If you did this as the first step toward the unleashing of war, well then, it is evident that nothing else is left to us but to accept this challenge of yours. If however, you have not lost your self-control and sensibly conceive what this might lead to, then, Mr. President, we and you ought not now to pull on the ends of the rope in which you have tied the knot of war, because the more the two of us pull, the tighter that knot will be tied. And a moment may come when that knot will be tied so tight that even he who tied it will not have the strength to untie it, and then it will be necessary to cut that knot, and what that would mean is not for me to explain to you, because you yourself understand perfectly of what terrible forces our countries dispose.

Consequently, if there is no intention to tighten that knot and thereby to doom the world to the catastrophe of thermonuclear war, then let us not only relax the forces pulling on the ends of the rope, let us take measures to untie that knot. We are ready for this.

We welcome all forces which stand on positions of peace. Consequently, I expressed gratitude to Mr. Bertrand Russell, too, who manifests alarm and concern for the fate of the world, and I readily responded to the appeal of the Acting Secretary General of the UN, U Thant.

There, Mr. President, are my thoughts, which, if you agreed with them, could put an end to that tense situation which is disturbing all peoples.

These thoughts are dictated by a sincere desire to relieve the situation, to remove the threat of war.

Respectfully yours,

Oct 27, 1962. Con, Aleksandar Fomin, Counselor; SOV--James Ramsey

long talk on evening of October 27. Mr. Fomin took a very gloomy view of the situation, saying it was fraught with all kinds of dangers. He complained that there seemed to be a lack of communications between our two countries on problems currently troubling us and suggested specifically that there should be more direct contact between Ambs Thompson and Dobrynin. He proposed exploratory conversations which would have as their objective a search for possible areas of compromise.

Mr. Fomin stated that the personality of the President was a factor which introduced great complications into the situation and possibly lay at the root of the trouble. He said that the Pres had a "do or die" attitude and quoted several instances of what he considered intemperate behavior on his part. These were: the feud with Broynhill in Virginia, the dispute with the steel companies, and the incident in Oxford, Miss. Mr. F expressed the opinion that the President need not have let such issues come to an open conflict since there had been other possibilities open to him for handling them. He drew an analogy between these examples and the White House's handling of the most pressing problems in which the USSR was vitally interested. Mr. F said that the President, being Irish, was very headstrong and determined to have his way at all costs. When queried as to what he thought would be the best way of reacting to the actions of a President such as he had described, Mr. F made some equivocal remarks which could be interpreted as indicating a lack of decision on this point.

Mr. F said that the Cuba for Turkey proposal should be considered as a serious offer. He stressed repeatedly that the USSR was seeking equality of treatment on the international scene and that the American people should now finally understand what it meant to have missiles of a foreign power pointed at their country from a neighboring state of minor dimensions. He said his government was flexible on the details of any agreement and would not be demanding in terms of a definite time period (he mentioned specifically a year for withdrawal from Turkey).

Mr. F concluded on the rather rueful note that the US was taking advantage of the SU's current dispute with the Chinese to advance its demands at a time inopportune to Moscow.

((F had had fiery talk with S that afternoon?))

(shown to Sec on 31 Oct; question whether remarks on Pres should be shown to White House. DR: This should not be sent to the White House. It has been overtaken by events. This ~~memo~~ memo should have been in our hands within one hour after the conversation occurred.))

29 Oct: I gathered from Bundy that the Pres's feeling is that after the Cuban affair we can push our Allies harder than was the case before. ((re Berlin))

Thompson

25 Oct: Political Path. Following political actions might be considered: 1. A proposal in some forum to withdraw our missiles from Turkey in return for Soviet withdrawal of their missiles from Cuba. This might be expressed in generalized form, such as withdrawal of missiles from territory contiguous or in proximity of the territory of the other. 2. Alternative approach might be to have a proposal for the UN to send teams to Cuba and Turkey to take control over the missiles there pending the outcome of negotiations. U Thant might be put up to advancing such proposals.

Oct 30: (going for complete removal of Soviet-Cuban tie, we would have to go much further in guarantee against invasion and attacks by emigre groups; might tie our hands later, with undesirable precedents for Berlin.)

Going only for nuclear weapons out of Cuba would permit conditional guarantee against invasion.

Oct 31; memcon with Yuri Zhukov, Foreign Editor of Pravda and Georgi Bolshakov, editor of USSR MAG.

I also pointed out the extremely difficult position in which the Soviet action in sending missiles to Cuba had placed the Pres. He had gone on record in the midst of an election campaign as saying that Cuba had only defensive arms and his political opponents were making the most of this.

(On reversal of Oct 27 from Oct 26 letters): I said our press had speculated ((Thompson?)) that Mr. K had made the first proposal and had been overruled. Zhukov said immediately he was certain this wasn't the case and that Mr. K was still the boss. He said he was not in Moscow at the time but his guess would be that the talk in this country and elsewhere by the press and others that there was a possibility of a Cuban-Turkish deal had led the Kremlin to put this forward in their interests in finding a solution. Mr. Bol. emphasized that there was much talk around New York about this matter. (?)

((Who predicted Sovs would get out without this? Rostow apparently believed.))

On leaving, Bolshakov complained of a particular picture published in US News and World Report showing the Pres talking to Gromyko and Dobrynin which labeled the Sov officials as liars. Bolshakov said he could assure me that neither Gromyko nor Dobrynin knew of this development (presumably the installation of medium-range missiles in Cuba).

3 Nov: memcon, with Dob, Nov 3.

At end of conversation, as he was leaving, I said that he must have been in a very awkward position over this whole thing and he said that this was quite true, and declared categorically that he had not known of the Soviet operation in Cuba. I said that I

believed his statement and felt sure that Sec Rusk did also.

Nov 6, draft reply to Nov 5 letter

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I am surprised that in your letter, which I received yesterday, you suggest that in giving your representative in New York a list of the weapons we consider offensive there was any desire on our part to complicate the situation.

The ~~xxxxxxxx~~ solution of the Cuban affair was established by my letter to you of Oct 27 and your reply of Oct 28. You will recall that in my letter of Oct 27, I referred to "all weapons systems in Cuba capable of offensive use." You will also recall that in my broadcast address of Oct 22 that in addition to medium-range ballistic missiles, I mentioned specifically "jet bombers capable of carrying nuclear weapons," as "an explicit threat to the peace and security of all the Americas." Finally, my proclamation of Oct 23 entitled "Interdiction of the Delivery of Offensive Weapons to Cuba" specifically listed bomber aircraft. These facts were all known at the time of our exchange of letters on Cuba. I cannot believe

that there could have been any doubt in your mind that Il-28s, capable of carrying nuclear weapons, were included. ((In short: you are lying again!))

Your letter says--and I agree--that we should not complicate the situation by minor things. But I assure you that this matter of Il-28s, is not a minor matter for us at all. ((del: or any possible future matter of submarines)) It is true, of course, that these bombers are not the most modern of weapons, but they are distinctly capable of offensive use against the US and other Western Hemisphere countries, and I am sure your own military men would inform you that the continued existence of such bombers in Cuba would require substantial measures of military defense in response by the US. Thus, in simply logic these are weapons capable of offensive use. But there is more in it than that, Mr. Chairman. These bombers could carry nuclear weapons for long distances, and they are clearly not needed, any more than missiles, for purely defensive purposes on the island of Cuba. Thus their continued presence would sustain the grave tension that the missiles, produced, and their removal, in my view, is quite as necessary to a good start on ending the recent crisis.

...I think I should go on to give you a full sense of the very strong feelings we have about this whole affair here in the US.

These recent events have given a profound shock to the relations between our two countries. It may be said, as Mr. Kuznetsov said the other day to Mr. McCloy, that the SU was under no obligation to inform us of any activities it was carrying on in a third country. But I cannot accept this view; I think you would not either, if the activities being carried on in a third country were such as to threaten a major alteration in the world balance of power upon which our present uneasy peace depends. ((preceding questioned; modified?)) And however one may judge that argument, the fact of the matter is that not only that we were not informed of what your Government was doing secretly in Cuba, but that active steps were taken to mislead us about what was being done.

I do not refer here only to the TASS article of September, but also to communications which were addressed to the highest levels of our Government through channels which heretofore had been used for confidential messages from the highest levels of your Government. Through these channels we were specifically informed that no missiles would be placed in Cuba which would have a range capable of reaching the US. ((Bolshakov?)) In reliance upon these assurances ((?)) I attempted, as you know, to restrain those who were giving warnings in this country about the trend of events in Cuba. Thus undeniable

3.

I think we must both recognize that it will be very difficult for any of us in this Hemisphere to look forward to any real improvement in our relations with Cuba if it continues to be a ((delete: significant)) military outpost of the Soviet Union. We have limited our action at present to the problem of offensive weapons, but I do think it may be important for you to consider whether a real normalization of the Cuba problem can be envisaged while there remain in Cuba large number of Soviet military technicians, and major weapons systems and communications complexes under Soviet control, all with the recurrent possibility that offensive weapons might be secretly and rapidly reintroduced. In this connection in particular, we must attach the greatest importance to the assurance you have given, that submarine bases will not be established in Cuba.

In summary, I believe that Cuba can never have normal relations with the other nations of this Hemisphere unless it ceases to allow its territory to be used militarily by a foreign power from outside the Hemisphere and adopts a peaceful course of non-interference in the affairs of its sister nations. These wider ~~considerations~~ considerations may belong to a later phase of the problem, but I hope that you will give them careful thought.

In the immediate situation, however, I repeat that it is the withdrawal of the missiles and bombers, with their supporting equipment, under adequate verification, and with a proper system ~~xxxx~~ for continued safeguards in the future, that is essential. This is the first necessary step away from the crisis, to open the door through which we can move to restore confidence and give attention to other problems which should be resolved in the interests of peace.

((or, earlier: away from the crisis, and unless we take it promptly, I do not see how renewed action on our side can be avoided.))

Dec 11, 1962

Dear Mr. President:

It would seem that you and we have come now to a final stage in the elimination of tension around Cuba. Our relations are already entering now their normal course since all those means placed by us on the Cuban territory which you considered offensive are withdrawn and you ascertained that to which effect a statement was already made by your side.

That is good. We appreciate that you just as we approached not dogmatically the solution of the question of eliminating the tension which evolved and this enabled us under existing conditions to find also a more flexible form of verification of the withdrawal of the above mentioned means. Understanding and flexibility displayed by you in this matter are highly appreciated by us but though our criticism of American imperialism remains in force because that conflict was indeed created by the policy of the US with regard to Cuba.

More resolute steps should now be taken to move towards finalizing the elimination of this tension, i.e. you on your part should clearly confirm at the UN as you did at your press conference and in your messages to me the pledge of non-invasion of Cuba by the US and your allies having removed reservations which are being introduced now into the US draft declaration in the Security Council and our representatives in NY should come to terms with regard to an agreed wording in the declarations of both powers of the commitments undertaken by them.

I believe that you already had an opportunity to familiarize yourself with the text proposed by us of a brief declaration of the Sov Gov in which the SU's main commitments resulting from the exchange of messages between us are formulated. We proceed from the assumption that an analogous brief declaration should be made by the US Gov and that the main US commitments resulting from the exchange of messages will also be fixed in it. Have a look, Mr. President, at this proposal submitted by us through your representatives in New York.

But notwithstanding what the agreement on the concrete texts of our declarations at this concluding stage will be, anyway the basic goal has been achieved and tension removed. I will tell you frankly that we have removed our means from Cuba relying on your assurance that the US and its allies will not invade Cuba. Those means really had the purpose of defending the sovereignty of Cuba and therefore after your assurance they lost their purpose. We hope and we would like to believe--I spoke of that publicly too, as you know--that you will adhere to the commitments which you have taken, as strictly as we do with regard to our commitments. We, Mr. President, have already fulfilled our commitments concerning the removal of our missiles and Il-28 planes from Cuba and we did it even ahead of time. It is obvious that fulfillment by you of your commitments cannot be as clearly demonstrated as it was done by us since your commitments are of a long-term nature. But it is important to fulfill them and to do everything so that no doubts are sown from the very start that they will not be fulfilled. I already told you at one time that our friends especially those of them who regard us with certain lack of understanding are trying to convince us that imperialism cannot be trusted, that is that you cannot be trusted, as a representative of such capitalist state as the United States of America.

It goes without saying that you and I have different understanding of these questions. I shall not go into details as to what my understanding is because in this regard you and I cannot have common opinion since we are people representing different political poles. But there are things that require diff common understanding on both sides and such common understanding is possible and even necessary. This is what I would like to tell you about.

Within a short period of time we and you have lived through a rather acute crisis. The acuteness of it was that we and you were already prepared to fight and this would lead to a thermonuclear war. Yes, to a thermonuclear world war with all its dreadful consequences. We took it into account and, being convinced that mankind would never forgive the statesmen who would not exhaust all possibilities to prevent catastrophe, agreed to a compromise although we understood--and we state it now-- that your claims had no grounds whatsoever, had no legal basis and represented a manifestation of sheer arbitrariness in international affairs. We agreed to a compromise because our main purpose was to extend a helping hand to the Cuban people in order to exclude the possibility of invasion of Cuba so that Cuba could exist and develop as a free sovereign state. This is our main purpose today, it remains to be our main purpose for tomorrow and we did not and do not pursue any other purpose.

Therefore, Mr. President, everything--the stability in this area and not only in this area but in the entire world--depends on how you will now fulfill the commitments taken by you. Furthermore, it will be now a sort of litmus paper, an indicator whether it is possible to trust if similar difficulties arise in other geographical areas. I think you will agree that if our arrangement for settling the Cuban crisis fails it will undermine a possibility for maneuver which you and we could resort to for elimination of danger, a possibility for compromise in the future if similar difficulties arise in other areas of the world, and they really can arise. We attach great significance to all this, and subsequent development will depend on you as President and on the US Government.

We believe that the guarantees for non-invasion of Cuba given by you will be maintained and not only in the period of your stay in the White House, that, to use an expression, goes without saying. We believe that you will be able to receive a mandate at the next election too, that is that you will be the US President for six years, which would appeal to us. At our times, six years in world politics is a long period of time and during that period we could create good conditions for peaceful coexistence on earth and this would be highly appreciated by the peoples of our countries as well as by all other peoples.

Therefore, Mr. President, I would like to express a wish that you follow the right way, as we do, in appraising the situation. Now it is of special importance to provide for the possibility of an exchange of opinion through confidential channels which you and I have set up and which we use. But the confidential nature of our personal relations will depend on whether you fulfill--as we did--the commitments taken by you and give instructions to your representatives in New York to formalize these commitments in appropriate documents. This is needed in order that all the peoples be sure that tension in the Caribbean is a matter of yesterday and that now normal conditions have been really created in the world. And for this is necessary to fix the assumed commitments in the documents of both sides and to register them with the UN.

3.

You, Mr. President, do not want to agree with the five conditions put forward by Prime Minister of the Republic of Cuba Fidel Castro. But, indeed, these five principles correspond fully to the provisions of the UN Charter which is a legal basis for the relations among states, a sort of foundation for securing peace and peaceful coexistence. I will tell you frankly that such position of yours is surprising. Maybe you have some difficulties. But, Mr. President, we who occupy such responsible position in the world and who are endowed with high trust, have to overcome these difficulties. The peoples will appreciate that because for them it means ensuring lasting peace on earth.

It would like to express to you my disapproval of certain things. We read now various articles by your columnists and correspondents and we are concerned that in those articles they are widely commenting on the confidential exchange of opinion and it is being done by the people who as it may seem have to relation to confidential channels set up between us. Judging by the contents of those articles it is clear that their authors are well informed and we get an impression that this is not a result of an accidental leak of the confidential information but a result of benevolence for those people into whose hands gets the information they make public. This evidently is done for the purpose of informing the public in a one-sided way.

Frankly speaking, if we use the confidential communications this way, it will be far from facilitating confidence in those channels. You yourself realize that if your side begins to act in the way that our exchange of opinion by way of confidential channels will leak through finger those channels will cease to be of use and may even cause harm. But this is up to you. If you consider that those channels have outlived themselves and are of no use any longer, then we also will draw appropriate conclusions in this respect. I tell you this straightforwardly and I would like to know your opinion on this matter. I have been denouncing American imperialism. But on the other hand I consider it useful for us to continue to maintain the possibility of confidential exchange of opinion because a minimum of personal trust is necessary for leading statesmen of both countries and this corresponds to the interests of our countries and peoples, to the interests of peace all over the world.

Let us, Mr. President, eliminate promptly the consequences of the Cuban crisis and get down to solving our other questions, and we have them in number. As far as nuclear test ban is concerned this is a minor question on the whole. I am going to address to you a confidential letter and proposals on this question and I hope that we will overcome difficulties existing in this question. The problem of disarmament is a different matter; it is a major and difficult question now.

But, of course, the main question is the German question and it is an easy and at the same time difficult one. I say that it is an easy and at the same time difficult question. But this is really so. It is easy because our proposals for concluding a peace treaty do not demand any concessions from either side, neither do they demand any losses from either side. These proposals only fix the situation which has developed as a result of World War II.

After the talks that our Minister of Foreign Affairs A. Gromyko had with your Secretary of State D. Rusk, only one question in effect remained unresolved--that of troops in West Berlin: troops of what countries, for what term and under what flag will be stationed there.

4.

I would like you to understand me correctly on this question. Let us solve it. We will not escape the necessity to solve this question anyway. To tell the truth, this question is not worth an eggshell if a realistic approach is employed in appraising the situation in Germany where two sovereign German states have developed and if a course followed is aimed at an agreement on West Berlin and not at leaving it to remain a dangerous hot-bed of collision between states. Should really you and we--two great states--submit, willingly or unwillingly, our policy, the interests of our states to the old-aged man who both morally and physically is with one foot in the grave? Should we really become toys in his hands? By concluding peace treaty we would lose nothing but we would gain a possibility to strengthen friendly relations between our states, would untie the knot in Europe which is fraught with danger for the whole world only because most extreme aggressive militarist forces in West Germany are interested in this.

Please excuse me for my straightforwardness and frankness but I believe as before that a frank and straightforward exchange of opinion is needed to avoid the worst.

Please, convey to your wife and your whole family wishes of good health from myself, my wife and my entire family.

December 14, 1962

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I was glad to have your message of December 11th and to know that you believe, as we do, that we have come to the final stage of the Cuban affair between us, the settlement of which will have significance for our future relations and for our ability to overcome other difficulties. I wish to thank you for your expression of appreciation of the understanding and flexibility we have tried to display.

I have followed with close attention the negotiations on the final settlement of the Cuban question between your representative, Mr. Kuznetsov, and our representatives, Amb. Stevenson and Mr. McCloy, in New York. In these negotiations we have tried to understand your position and I am glad to note that Mr. Kuznetsov has also shown effort to understand our problems. It is clearly in the interest of both sides that we reach agreement on how finally to dispose of the Cuban crisis. To this end, Amb. Stevenson and Mr. McCloy presented on Wednesday a new draft of a joint statement which by now has certainly reached you. I wish to assure that it is our purpose to end this affair as simply and clearly as possible.

You refer to the importance of my statements on an invasion of Cuba and of our intention to fulfill them, so that no doubts are sown from the very start. I have already stated my position publicly in my press conference on November 20th, and I am glad that this statement appears to have your understanding; we have never wanted to be driven by the acts of others into war in Cuba. The other side of the coin, however, is that we do need to have adequate assurances that all offensive weapons are removed from Cuba and are not reintroduced, and that Cuba itself commits no aggressive acts against any of the nations of the Western Hemisphere. As I understand you, you feel confident that Cuba will not in fact engage in such aggressive acts, and of course I already have your own assurance about the offensive weapons. So I myself should suppose that you could accept our position-- but it is probably better to leave final discussion of these matters to our representatives in New York. I quite agree with you that the larger part of the crisis has now been ended and we should not permit others to stand in the way of promptly settling the rest without further acrimony.

With regard to your reference to the confidential channels set up between us, I can assure you that I value them. I have not concealed from you that it was a serious disappointment to me that dangerously misleading information should have come through these channels before the recent crisis. You may also wish to know that by an accident or misunderstanding one of your diplomats appears to have used a representative of a private television network as a channel to us. This is always unwise in our country, where the members of the press often insist on printing at some later time what they may learn privately.

Because our systems are so different, you may not be fully familiar with the practices of the American press. The competition for news in this country is fierce. A number of the competitors are not great admirers of my administration, and perhaps an even larger number are not wholly friendly to yours. Here in Washington alone we have 1200 reporters accredited to the White House alone, and thousands more in other assignments. Not one of them is accountable to this government for what he reports. It would be a great mistake to think that what appears in newspapers and magazines necessarily has anything to do with the policy and purpose of this government. I am glad to say that I have some friends among newspapermen, but no spokesmen.

But let me emphasize again that we do indeed value these confidential channels. I entirely share your view that some trust is necessary for leading statesmen of our two countries; I believe that it is important to build the area of trust wherever possible. I shall of course continue to hold and to express my convictions about the relative merits of our systems of government, and I shall not be surprised if you do the same.

In particular, we have been very glad to have opportunities for private exchanges with and through Mr. Bolshakov, and I am sorry to learn that he is returning to Moscow. It is our impression that he has made a real effort to improve communications and understanding between our two governments, and we shall miss him very much.

I appreciate your writing me so frankly, and in return I have tried to be as straightforward, for I agree with you that only through such frank exchanges can we better understand our respective points of view. Partly for this reason I refrained in my last press conference from commenting on certain aspects of your speech before the Supreme Soviet with which you realize, of course, we could not agree.

We also are hopeful that once the Cuban crisis is behind us, we shall be able to tackle the other problems confronting us and to find the path to their solution.

I cannot refrain from commenting briefly on your reference to the German question, though I do not think that it would be useful in this message to expound our full position once again. But your suggestion that the interests of our two countries are toys in the hands of Chancellor Adenauer seems to me to miss entirely the true nature of the problem which confronts us in ~~European~~ Central Europe. For here the vital interests of many states are involved--on your side as well as ours. If this is recognized, then I am confident that a way can be found which will accommodate these interests and which will lead to a peaceful settlement. I cannot quite agree with you that Mr. Rusk and Mr. Gromyko have settled everything on Berlin but one issue. They are skillful and experienced diplomats, but I do not think we should give them too much credit yet. Still it is quite true, as you say, that the main issue which seems to separate us on Berlin is that of the presence of allied troops in West Berlin. I am confident that if you could bring from an understanding of our position on this vital point, our chances of making progress would be greatly improved.

3.

I look forward to receiving your confidential letter and proposals on the test ban question, and I think there is every reason to keep working on this problem. I hope that in your message on this subject you will tell me what you think about the position of the people in taking on this question. It seems to me very important for both of us that in our efforts to secure an end to nuclear testing we should not overlook this area of the world.

Thank you for your expressions of good wishes to me and my family, and let me in turn send you and your wife and family our personal good wishes for the coming year.

New York Times Mag, Nov. 18, 1962

Mr. K said that even though he had had many difficulties with General Eisenhower, he was certain that, if Eisenhower were President at this time, the problem of Cuba would have been handled in a much more mature manner. He stated he would hate to believe that President Kennedy's decision was due to the fact that we were having elections in the near future in the US. In any event, he observed Pres. Kennedy had embarked on a very, very dangerous policy, whether because of American misgivings or the President's youth.

26 July, 1962 K-Thompson (25 July)

K said what modern science had been able accomplish was "awful" in real sense of word. He made this remark not in effort to frighten or threaten anyone. He said he always told his military people whenever they showed him some new development that they must realize other side not stupid and able accomplish same thing. He said level of science in both countries about same and what one could do, other could do also.

Throughout conversation K made many references to U-2.

In discussing disarmament...I said...our whole effort in this field seemed breaking down because of Soviet obsession with secrecy which I believed based on outdated analysis. I cited Telstar as latest evidence world shrinking and said whatever advantage they had from secrecy wasting asset. K responded it might be true they gave too much attention to and importance to secrecy but said on our side our military obsessed with desire acquire ever more information. He said of course every country had spies but sending U-2 across frontier was essentially act of war. We wanted to know where their rocket bases were but these like anything else could be camouflaged. ((had just started?)) I said it was natural human trait to fear unknown but pointed out this not to their advantage since it caused our military to prepare to meet threats which might not exist. K said he was more concerned now with use of outer space than with planes but said his own people had shown him photos (not clear whether from planes or satellites but I inferred latter) showing airfield or factories and even planes on field, but not showing what purpose of planes was or what factories produced. Always possible conceal essential information.

With regard to our zonal proposal K said there were only limited number of Soviet rocket bases and we knew where they are. It would therefore be simple for us to arrange to inspect them all. ... He said essence of disarmament problem was that we wanted to take away weapon with which they could hit us while preserving our overseas bases for use against them. ((He was about to acquire base))

....
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...K said he

20 July, 1962 K-Thompson (20 July)

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K said he had another subject to discuss even though he disliked bringing up unpleasant matter on my last visit. He had read report first Rusk-Gromyko conversation and half of second but it was already clear our dialogue was coming to end. He would have no choice but to proceed with signature of treaty after which our rights there, including right of access, would end. He emphasized that East Germans were allies and Soviets would stand by them. On this occasion and others in conversation he showed great sensitivity to what he considered threats and said Soviet Union great power, not small country which could be threatened with impunity. Pres had suggested time would make solution easier but he could not wait indefinitely. From some things Sec Rusk had said we apparently had idea of attending talks, but this not acceptable. Sov govt had tried many different proposals to find solution but we insisted on maintaining occupation in center of sovereign GDR.

...EXXAR Thomp: It was Soviet side and not we that had focussed world attention on Berlin to point where smallest thing became test of our intentions. I pointed out that psychology of people of Berlin and West Germany had become very important. Many people on our side felt that acceptance of Soviet proposals meant we would lose not only Berlin but rest of Germany and consequently all of Europe. I said that they, and we knew what Ulbricht wanted in West Berlin. K had himself said that our troops in Berlin had no military value and we agreed with this appraisal, but they were essential to maintain confidence of people of Berlin.

K said we often referred to prestige but did not take into account prestige of Soviet Union. Continuance of occupation would be humiliating to East Germany and Soviet Union. He said we also referred to our commitment to people of Berlin but we had no right to make such commitment when it involved interests of allies who had made enormous sacrifices in war. I said I thought in matters of this kind it was important to try to get other persons point of view. I asked him what he would do if he had Soviet troops in similar situation and we said we would cut them off. I knew he would respond that he would sign treaty and withdraw (before interpreter reached this sentence K interjected to say exactly that). I got impression that this remark had some effect. K said he was considering bringing matter before UN and in this connection made some vague reference to possible commission of jurists--in order that SU could make clear its position before signing treaty. He said he was discussing this possibility with his colleagues but no decision had been taken and he had not made up his own mind whether this was best course but it had certain appeal for him.

This part of conversation ended by my telling him he should find way to give us better choice of alternatives than those now before us and...he was cordial throughout discussion and I had impression he considered he had to move ahead but was deeply troubled. He emphasized many times that this was the one problem standing in way of good relations between us and I believe he is sincere in this.

So Foreign Office transcript of Berlin-UN remark:

US and its allies are even threatening war in connection with our intention to conclude a German peace treaty and settle the West Berlin question on that basis. In view of this the thought has occurred to us in some way or other to interest the UN in removing such a threat on the part of the Western Powers, if it were to arise in connection with the signing by us of a German peace treaty.

Thomp: I believe above represents considerably modified version of what actually was said.

((So this was proposal K was going to bring to UN--after elections--and after missiles operational!))

K asked me to speak to Pres about our harassment of Soviet ships. He cited both air inspection and one case where American ship had commanded Soviet ship stop or be fired on. He said these virtually act of war and if continued Soviets would have to reply in kind, but wished avoid warlike actions.

I have taken up this problem several times before and can only repeat my strong conviction that whatever value we may gain from our identification of Soviet ships in this way, we are paying too high a price for it in effect it has upon top Soviet leadership. This was almost only time in our long conversation when K spoke with any heat. He said SU was great power and could not tolerate being treated in this way. He said he doubted Pres knew about this personally and had considered writing him letter about it.

....

Reflecting upon my talk with K have following conclusions:

1) Am more convinced than ever that he at least does not intend push Berlin question to point of real risk of war. Much will depend, however, on attitude his colleagues and allies as well as upon how we handle the matter.... suggest we must be extremely careful on the one hand to show we are serious in our determination to defend Berlin and on other to avoid engaging their prestige particularly in the military field as they are unbelievably sensitive about this. I think, for example, we should for the present play down any boasts about our military superiority and in Berlin itself avoid any action that could be considered by them as annoyance on our part. At same time we should proceed vigorously with contingency planning which they will know about but without publicity.

I believe K is likely to bring Berlin problem ~~xx~~ before UN and probably will personally present Soviet case.

...I doubt that we will get anywhere on real disarmament at this time. I got impression, however, that K will be prepared seriously to consider steps to prevent war by accident or miscalculation. If we can get over the Berlin hump and then let ~~mm~~ know our intelligence capabilities we might make progress on GCD.

Thomp: The mere fact that K asserted he could achieve his seven year plan without disarmament convinces me that the opposite is the case...

K told me he had suffered from drought in some areas and excess rain in others but that crop would be about best they had ever had. In my opinion this almost certainly untrue and knowing K believe if this were fact he would have emphasized it much more strongly.